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The great difference which I found between this wood and that first described, will show, that the latter is destitute of any medical principles, which fact determined me to discontinue my researches respecting the latter.

Mr. L'Herminier, an experienced chemist of Gaudaloupe, who examined the alcornoque by order of that government, has only discovered medical qualities in the root of the alcornoque. He has declined examining the wood for the same reasons which induced me to it.

Our corresponding opinion proves sufficiently that the *root* is the only part of that tree to which the peculiar medical qualities ought to be attributed; and we must leave it to future practice to ascertain the effects of the bark of the trunk of the tree, on the human body, in which the tannin predominates over the bitter principle.

There might doubtless be many other chemical researches made on this subject by what I have already advanced in regard to the age of the tree, the season when cut, and the place where it grew. For instance: it would be important to examine the vapours which I have mentioned relative to the animal odour, which were developed. These kinds of researches are difficult in a country where a proper pneumatic apparatus is not yet introduced.

I believe that what I have already advanced, is sufficient to give a place to the alcornoque in the therapeutic *materia medica*, and to appreciate its effects according to the results which established its present reputation.

(*To be concluded in our next.*)

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

AMERICAN CRITIQUE ON MARIA EDGEWORTH'S WRITINGS.

I HAPPENED lately to meet with some American newspapers, and was much pleased with the manner, in which the National Intelligencer published in the city of Washington is conducted. It is the demi-official paper of the American government. Besides its political information, and the remarks connected with the subject of politics, it in some instances displays a literary taste, which is highly commendable. The following extracts from a critique on the writings of Maria Edgeworth, is interesting, and exhibits her writings in a novel and just point of view. It is curious, and may be useful, to have light reflected on us from our Transatlantic brethren. The freedom of their remarks arising from the spirit imbibed from their free constitution, may be useful to correct that tameness of disposition which is becoming so prevalent with us, and spreads from our timid manner of handling political subjects, superinduced on us by the terrors of exercising a free press, even to our literature, and in many instances to our works of criticism. A disposition to advocate slavish opinions, either through fear or venality, has a tendency to vitiate the entire character, and produce a tame insipidity, and a feebleness of judgment in other cases. Hence the general tendency "to wonder with a foolish face of praise," and by indiscriminate approbation, to render such general commendation of little value. When I read the tale of Forrester, on its first appearance, my sentiments on the defects of the remedies of dancing and polite accomplishments, proposed

to correct his amiable eccentricities, exactly corresponded with the observations of the American writer. With him also, I agree, in the high estimation in which I hold the general tendency of Maria Edgeworth's valuable writings, but I like that those who praise, should be discriminating.

A READER.

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"MISS EDGEWORTH'S MORAL TALES.

"THOSE who take pleasure in the progress of civilization, and the diffusion of knowledge, must have observed with peculiar gratification, the attention lately bestowed on the instruction of young people, to the knowledge of physical facts, and the estimation of moral truths. The road to the temple of science is no longer steep, thorny, and rugged; labour has smoothed its inequalities, and genius has bedecked, with the flowers of eloquence, the borders of its serpentine and seductive path. For this happy change, we are not a little indebted to female writers, among whom Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Opie, the Messdames Plumtree, and Maria Edgeworth, rank among the most conspicuous and useful.

"In the *Tales of Fashionable Life*, by the latter lady, sound principles of morality are inculcated in a most captivating manner; her "Ennui" in particular, is remarkable for simplicity, naivete, and elegance. In her *Parent's Assistant, or Stories for Children*, she has strenuously avoided every thing puerile and extravagant, and rendered them interesting to young readers, by the benevolence and industry they inculcate and reward; by the meanness, extravagance, idleness, and credulity which they expose and punish. Addressed to older scholars, this lady has also lately dedicated another publication, entitled, "Moral Tales;" in which she en-

deavours to impress upon her readers, the necessity of pleasing manners, as well as of continued exertions. Arguing from the acquisition of physical, she successfully proves that mental strength must be the result of laborious industry, and determined perseverance. This important deduction is exemplified in a series of interesting tales, to all of which, however, we cannot give unqualified approbation. In these days, when the music and dancing master, the barber and the man-milliner, have too much undermined the heroic virtues, and too successfully prostrated patriotism, firmness, and simplicity, at the feet of self-love, duplicity, and show, we regret to see the abilities of Miss Edgeworth employed in deteriorating the most estimable virtues, conniving at corruption, flattering national prejudices, and catching at popularity by attributing virtues to the opulent among her countrymen, for conduct which her discriminating talent must lead her at least to suspect might arise from other causes. Thus, in the interesting story of *Forrester*, we find the most benevolent intentions rendered useless, and the hero ridiculous, from a want of the graces; all his evils are however remedied through the important medium of a dancing-master. We are much induced to question the real utility of this art; and as many pass through life with much respectability, without this great desideratum, we cannot conceive it altogether essential to the character of a gentleman. We say nothing of the love of finery; of the dissipation; late hours; of the nearly unlicensed freedom between the sexes at the most unsuspicious age and times, which the dancing school induces, or the consequences which necessarily will arise in youthful minds, from a familiar view of the myster-

ries of loo, whist, and quadrille. Forrester however is a fine character, and our regret is only at the consequence attached to frivolous acquirements. We ought to strengthen, not weaken young minds.

"In the Knapsack, instead of indiscriminately praising the character of a soldier, we should have rejoiced to have beheld a well drawn distinction between the man who bravely dares his life, his all, in defence of his beloved country's safety and independence; of the rights of himself, his children, his friends, and his fellow-citizens, and the venal miscreant, who, as the servile hireling of a despot, spreads far and wide the miseries of war, lifting alike his murderous arm to destroy the liberties of the country that gave him birth, and those of every foreign nation the physical force of his master may be able to overwhelm.

"We certainly feel as much attachment, and are as fully satisfied of the value of the principles of trial by jury, as Miss Edgeworth; but we think young people should be taught to discriminate; hence, "The Prussian Vase" might have offered a favourable opportunity of pointing out the folly of shutting twelve men up in a room, as in England, without the common necessities of life, until their opinion be unanimous; as well as of the consequent perjury, and subsequent disregard of the most sacred obligations which must result.

"The works of this lady require no Clap Catchers, as the players call them; they will force their own way by their merit—why therefore so much national puff? Why those compliments to the opulent of England, for their conduct to the French emigrant priests and nobles? Was she afraid the world were about to lift the veil, and perceive that

this was almost all induced by one common feeling and interest? Are the world likely soon to enquire how much of this vaunted hospitality arose from ostentation; how much from the desire of imposing upon unreflecting observers the necessity of upholding the advocates of kings, nobles, and priests, or how few of those who boast so much of English hospitality, would have extended their aid to the philosophical Lavoisier, the enlightened Condorcet, the unfortunate La Fayette, the philanthropic Brissot, the virtuous Roland, or his heroic wife, had they escaped from France, the Olmutz's of England, and her alien laws? Or that mankind will look back to the fires of Birmingham, and ask, how many of those she now so complacently daubs, opened their doors to the amiable Priestley, flying from the destructive bigotry of an English mob? Few then did so, but the example of a Parr was worthy of national imitation, and universal approbation.

"With these defects, which we have noticed, because the duty of moral writers, as Miss Edgeworth professes herself to be, is rather to point out defects, than indiscriminately to praise. The "Moral Tales" are highly entitled to commendation, and we do therefore seriously recommend them to the perusal of our young friends. At the same time, remembering that barely reading any work, however valuable, produces but little benefit; they should acquire the habit of examining for themselves, and not of resting on authority, and never yield assent to whatever is not in itself reasonable and right.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

PERMIT me, through the medium of your Magazine, if not inconsis-